

JACK JOUETT'S RIDE, By ALICE M. TYLER

It seems almost incredible that one of the most thrilling adventures of the War of the American Revolution has up to the present time remained almost unknown except in the immediate locality where the hero of the adventure, gallant Jack Jouett, lived and died.

But for his daring and determination, it is certain that Major Tarleton, of the British army, and his free-booters would have captured the members of the General Assembly of Virginia and Governor Thomas Jefferson in June of 1781, when Tarleton, eager to take them prisoners, made a forced march from the headquarters of Cornwallis, on the lower James, to Charlottesville, where the Legislature had adjourned in May, when Cornwallis first invaded Virginia.

To understand the vital importance of the service rendered by Jack Jouett to his State and country, a brief reference to military operations within the limits of the Old Dominion at the time of the occurrence seems necessary. Opposed in the interior of the State to the regulars of Cornwallis's army was the Marquis de Lafayette with a force of several thousand men, three-fourths of whom were militia, and his calculated to cope with British soldiers of thorough experience and training. General Wayne, dispatched by Washington to Virginia from the Northern army with 900 men, had not yet arrived on the scene of action. At Point of Fork, formed by the junction of the Rivanna and Fluvanna Rivers, Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe, who had successfully executed the purpose for which he had been sent, that of driving back Baron Steuben's detachment of Virginians and destroying stores at that point, had been joined by Cornwallis, and both were busy at the work of pillaging and devastation, which seemed to be the prime objects throughout the whole campaign of Virginia invasion, begun by Arnold in January of 1781.

Tarleton moved upon Charlottesville with 150 cavalry, and seventy mounted infantry. He was ordered to surprise the General Assembly, seize Governor Jefferson at Monticello, do any other mischief possible, and then unite his force with that of Cornwallis and Clinch at Point of Fork, in Fluvanna county.

Everything promised the success for which the soul of ambitious Tarleton yearned. But he had not included Jack Jouett and Jack Jouett's fleet horse, his calculations. The worthy patriot, then living in Charlottesville, had ridden down into Louisa county to look after the promise of crops on his farm, worked under an overseer and situated some miles from the county seat.

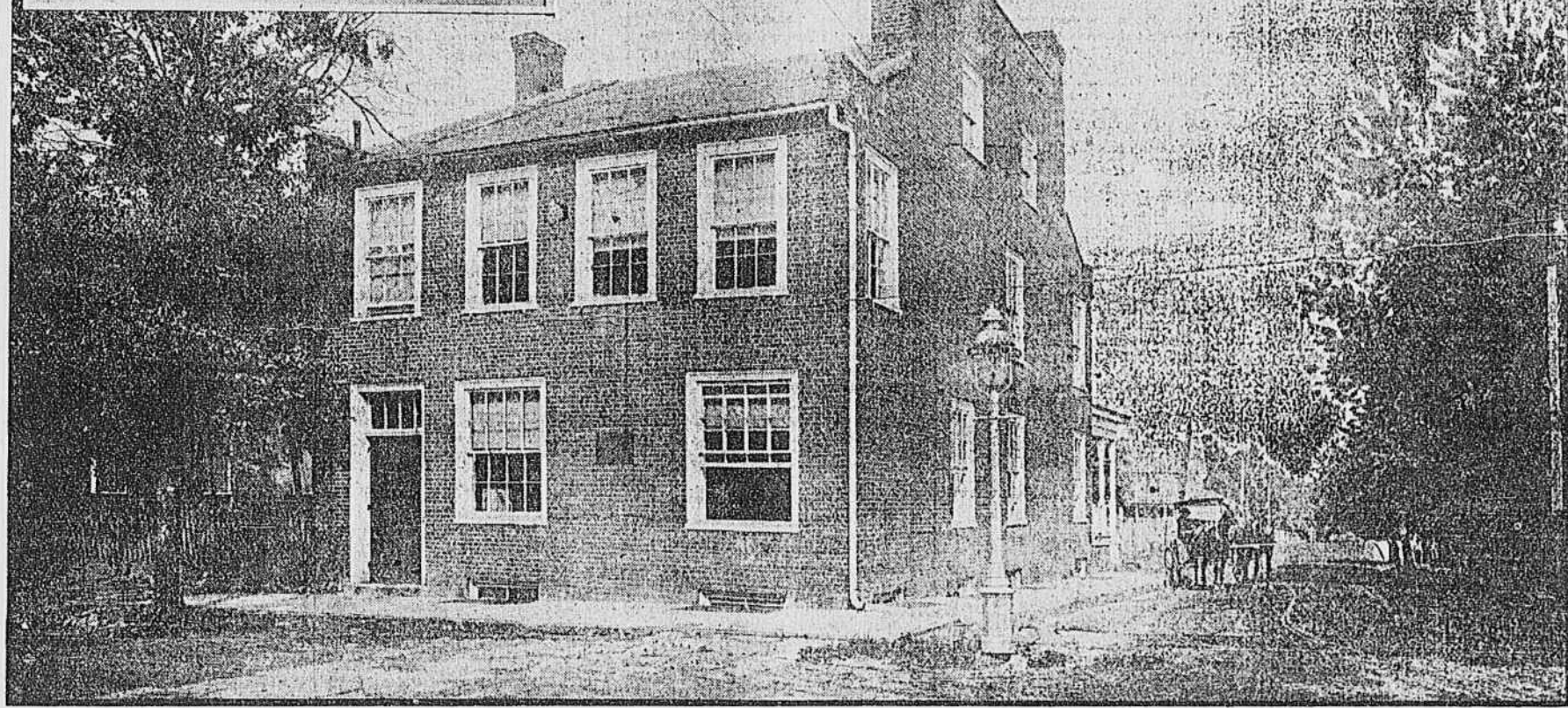
Jack was practical. It is not to be supposed as he passed through his fields and noted with satisfaction evidences of abundant promise that he said to himself: "What is so rare as a day in June?" Not he, for though nature wore a smiling face, there was a feeling of restlessness and unrest, even in a community hitherto free, through actual experience, from the rude alarms of war.

Jouett was an early riser, like most Virginia men of his class and occupation. His conference with his overseer was finished before the hour of noon. Then his thoughts reverted to a friend he desired to visit in this neighborhood, where Jouett's forebears had been pioneer planters early in the eighteenth century. A decade of years previous he himself had sold a notable piece of property, a wayside tavern fronting on the public thoroughfare and known as King's Ordinary, to an inn keeper called Sackville King. The tavern property was but a short way from Jouett's farm. Its shaded porch and appetizing table called an invitation which sounded pleasantly enough to induce Jack to turn his horse's head toward the ordinary when business had been finished satisfactorily.

The old tavern of that day was a wooden building, plain, but comfortable and spacious. It was pulled down in 1815 by Henry Pendleton, into whose hands it passed. He built a brick mansion on the site of King's Ordinary. Because within its walls was the first cuckoo clock in its special community, the name of the place had been previously changed to Cuckoo. Its early memories are still associated with Jack Jouett, however, who must have been an individual of a most magnetic personality; for the key to the barn of his ancient nearby plantation is still preserved as a relic by the McDonald family, who succeeded Mr. Jouett in ownership. Cuckoo is now the

SITE OF OLD SWAN TAVERN
WHERE LIVED AND DIED JACK JOUETT
WHOSE HEROIC RIDE SAVED
MR. JEFFERSON, THE GOVERNOR,
AND THE VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY
FROM CAPTURE BY TARLETON
JUNE 1781

ERECTED BY THE MONTICELLO BRANCH
OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR
THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA ANTIQUITIES
1910



RED LANDS CLUB, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA., SITE OF OLD SWAN TAVERN.

home of Dr. Eugene Pendleton, as it was that of his father, Dr. Philip Barbour Pendleton, before him.

In the deeply shaded porch, then of King's Ordinary, on a summer's morning, June 3, 1781, sat mine host and Jack Jouett, smoking their pipes and talking at their ease. Suddenly Jack Jouett sprang to his feet. "Hark," he said, "King, listen to the tramp of horse's feet!" And then, a moment later, "Horses, say I, 'tis the redcoats themselves, on the road to Charlottesville. I'll venture. But I'll race them. I'll race them! And you, my good friend, just hold them for a few minutes. I'll slip out your back door, get my good horse and be away like the wind, to tell Patrick Henry and Tom Jefferson that Tarleton is coming."

While he spoke he snatched up his gloves and riding whip, cleared the back door at a bound, and sped to the stables in the rear, where, in a few moments, his horse was saddled and bridled, led quietly out across a field, over a fence, and then, with Jack Jouett in the saddle and the touch of a familiar hand on the reins, the intelligent animal started off at a pace that settled after awhile into a steady, tireless stride, putting miles between his rider and possible pursuit.

"So ho, good comrade," said Jack, stroking his horse's mane, "so ho, let us take it quietly. We are going through plantation ways that only you and I know, but with all we can do, we have little enough advantage, and you must not waste your strength. Steady boy, steady!" The horse flung up his head as if he understood his

master's meaning, and then went on again.

In the meanwhile Tarleton had stopped at King's Ordinary, had loudly ordered the best to eat and drink that the tavern afforded, and had questioned Sackville King as to the route which he was going to pursue.

"Is anything known of our coming, think you?" asked Tarleton, and then added grimly: "I'll warrant me not, for I have left a warning behind me heavy enough to keep busy tongues still. But, sirrah," he continued, with a scowl on his face, "what is the news, what's afoot in this God-forsaken quarter of the earth, which you people call the Commonwealth of Virginia?" And he flicked a particle of dust off his boot and glanced impatiently at Sackville King.

Mindful of Jack Jouett, and believing in his ability to give warning, mine host resolved also to play his part. "There's little enough of news as you say, my lord," quoth he, "now so many Virginia men are away with Greene in South Carolina, but—seeing a spark of anger beginning to burn in the English commander's eyes—there's been a gathering of some kind at Castle Hill, Dr. Thomas Walker's place, and Mr. John Walker's for the last week. The houses of these gentlemen are close to your line of march, my lord, and I'm a-thinking you'll hear news in plenty, should you stop at one place or 't' other. There's them within both as knows. And Sackville King opposed to the stern eye bent upon him the bland ingenuities of the man who is at peace with himself and all the world. Tarleton unbent somewhat, and Sack-

vile King exerted himself to occupy his attention and gain a few moments more for the friend on whose fleet horse and stout heart depended the fate of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry.

The afternoon waned. The shadows lengthened and the sun set and the moon rose. About midnight a low whistle under the windows of Dr. Thomas Walker's bed room aroused its occupant. "That's Jack Jouett," came from below in guarded tones. "Major Tarleton with cavalry and mounted infantry is headed this way and will be here by daybreak. Send away any visitor who doesn't want to be made prisoner and get yourself out of harm's way. Be quick, and don't fail to convey word to Mr. John Walker. And, oh, Mrs. Walker—as a female form appeared beside the doctor—give the Britisher such a good breakfast that he will be late getting into Charlottesville. Good-by, good folks, hurry I say." And the next moment the receding sound of horse hoofs told that Jack Jouett was again racing with Tarleton. On through the night he rode, up hill and down, with the fragrant scents of summer blossoms in his nostrils and the soft touch of summer breezes on his face.

The faint red of dawn was flushing the East, when with still a gay and confident air, with his head still erect and his lips whistling a love tune, with his horse not altogether spent, Jack Jouett clattered through the streets of Charlottesville, paused long enough to speak his warning and send the legislators, Patrick Henry among them, on their way to Staunton to the west of Charlottesville, where they conveyed again on the 7th of June, before Tarleton, who lingered long at breakfast over cream and strawberries, waffles and flavoured Virginia ham. In the hospitable home of Mrs. Thomas Walker, arose from his repast. It is said, indeed, that the good lady's charm of manner and person largely atoned for the disappointment caused by her casual mention that the men folk of her household and those of Mr. John Walker's were away for a fortnight's hunting and fishing in the Virgin's mountains. The forest in which the British soldiers encamped is still called Tarleton's Wood.

Tarleton cursed his ill luck under his breath when at length he got into his saddle with his horse's head turned toward Charlottesville. He little knew that Jack Jouett's race was already run, his mission already accomplished, that Patrick Henry and his associates were speeding toward the Mountain Top House, at Arden, Virginia, and that at Monticello Mrs. Jefferson and her children were hurriedly leaving for Colonel Edward Carter's, across the county line into Bedford, and Thomas Jefferson standing by his horse, ready to follow them, was saying to Jack Jouett: "You have saved the State, sir, and beat Tarleton in a neck and neck race of forty miles. Ah, Jack, my fine fellow, I wish that we had more like you. I owe you, not only my own safety, but—pointing to the carriage now disappearing over the hill—the safety of those dearest to me on earth." "Your Excellency," replied Jack, "we are men, and words need be few between you and me. Moreover, time presses and Tarleton rides. So up with you and away." But you, Jack, but you," said Mr. Jefferson. "Ah, Your Excellency, ragged mountains and mountaineers tell no secrets, and I go to hiding places where Tarleton dares not follow. Be sure of that." And once more Jack shook his reins and cantered lightly over the hill, disappearing just as the redcoats, dispatched by Tarleton under Captain McLeod, approached Monticello to find that, again, their expected prisoner had eluded pursuit.

In Charlottesville, Tarleton, furious with disappointment, first heard of Jack Jouett. A half-witted hostler, frightened and confused by blows and threats, told the tale. "There's just about sun-up, 'twere, when I heard a clattering outside in the streets and a shout. I runned out and there set Jack Jouett on his own horse, Prince Charlie. 'What's a'miss, master?' says I. 'The matter is,' answered he, 'that I be runned a race of forty miles and beat it by some lengths. Now tell me if

Patrick Henry within?' And I says, 'He be, master, but what's he got to do with the race?' And he laughs and gets down from his horse. 'I am going in,' says he, 'but for a second or two. Give Prince Charlie a rub down and a drink of water with a little brandy in it, for he has come far and his work is not yet done.'

"Then," continued the hostler, "I c'en did what he said and I was holding Prince Charlie by the bridle when he come out and was away like the

wind. But he left the house well awake behind him. 'Twas but a matter of a few minutes before Mr. Henry and the rest of the men who come with him from Richmond was themselves arising out of town. They didn't wait for breakfast, not they, and for once in their lives," he added, reflectively, "they saddled their own horses."

"And where's Jack Jouett now?" queried Tarleton. "Lad, master," said the hostler "now he should I know? Jack is a man of whimsies, so he be.

When he is minded to hide himself away, there's no man alive, I take it, that can find him."

Certainly Tarleton, balked of his prey, never did. When that marauder had left the little Piedmont town in peace, by riding it of his presence, the hospitable doors of Monticello were thrown open again. The men of the Walker households likewise resumed their hospitable custom, and Jack Jouett, gallant foray over, sat at ease under his own roof tree at the Swan Tavern, in Charlottesville, and exchanged courtesies with Mr. Jefferson, when he paused on his daily trip to and from the post-office, at the tavern door.

In the Swan Tavern Jack lived for many years after Yorktown's surrender, and Prince Charlie was the well-tended companion of his old age. The grave of the patriot was made in the yard to the rear of the tavern on the site of what the Redlands Club of Charlottesville has erected. In 1910 a historical association of Virginia women placed on the walls a tablet commemorating the name and the fame of one whom his State has thus far signally failed to honor.

His memorable ride covered a difficult route of forty miles. Had he not been as ready and willing to undertake and carry it through, had the government, the Legislature and the Governor of Virginia been captured June 4, 1781, it is most likely that the American Revolution might not have ended as it did.

Possibly the State of Virginia, in falling to erect a statue to the memory of Jack Jouett, assumed the lofty attitude of the mother of Washington, who, when she was congratulated by a French officer on the distinguished services of her son as the leader of the American forces, answered calmly, "George has but done his duty. It was impossible that he should do otherwise."

GORDONSVILLE

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)
Gordonville, Va., March 25.—Mrs. J. Etienne, of Minneapolis, Minn., recently purchased from Mr. Murphy his farm, "Rye Mountain," three miles from Gordonville. Mr. Etienne will take possession of his new home in the near future.

Miss Annie Schanberger, of Madison Run, was a guest this week of Miss Addie Cowherd, at "Monteth."

Miss Gertrude Bear has returned from Baltimore, where she has been on a trip.

Jane C. Graves, Thomas Sampson and M. D. Cowherd, Jr., attended court at Orange on Monday.

Miss Mary Wadsworth, of "Charlton," near Orange, was a week-end guest of Miss Martha Graves, at "Weston."

Richard N. Tarkington, was a Gordonville visitor on Monday.

Mrs. Allen Fotts, of "Happy Creek," spent Monday in Charlottesville.

Misses Belle and Margaret Martin have returned to Somerset after spending several days with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Martin.

Misses Mary, Wilbur, Osborne and their guest, Thomas Farlee, spent Wednesday at Campbell's, the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Julian Morris.

William Morris, of Campbell's, was a Sunday visitor at "Lower Springfields."

Miss Miller, of "Clifton," has returned home after a visit of several days in New York.

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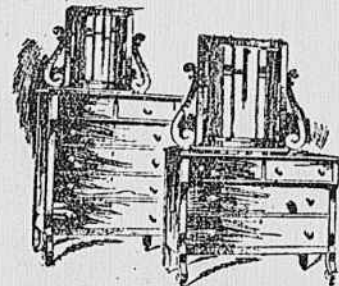
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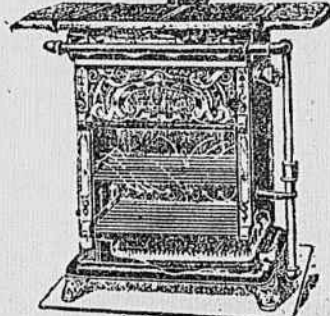
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